as mere ornament) cut up, weak, distracting, and deprives them of that idea of solidity or strength which should be inseparable to even the most ornamental building that architecture could raise.

String courses should form a primary ornamental feature, and are well shown in the earliest palaces of the Revival at Cremona and Piacenza, and other Lombard towns; they are more reasonable subjects for good ornament than the top friese, which is too far off to be easily made out; indeed, they should partake more of the character of a friese, with protecting mouldings, carried off by mouldings and spaces into the wall, and ranging on the first tier of windows with the balconies: all projecting mouldings may be advantageously carved at angles into heads or figures, as was often done in Tudor architecture, or heraldic shields, somewhat after the Tuscan principle.

There are many other methods of obtaining ornamental effect which take a secondary place, such as the formation of geometrical patterns by receding brickwork, a system very effective in some cases, and most in use among the Spaniards and Moors: for blank walls with brick cornices on edge it tells very well. Specimens of it may be seen more particularly at La Seu, and the leaning tower at Zaragossa.

Different coloured and polished marbles should be most cautiously used in such a climate as ours, the more because they appear unfitted for exposure, and the effect gained by them is very dubious. These and the system of intaglio either of marble or of artificial substance, are more fitted for internal decoration, and then should be used reasonably, and not placed so far from the eye as to be seen with difficulty, as is often the case at Florence, Palermo, Monreale, and Orvieto, and in many modern Gothic buildings. Geometric designs of the same description used by the Moors, are generally placed nearest the eye, as in skirting, dados, &c., but this comes more under the head of internal ornament, which we will not enter on.

It was the custom of the Romanesque builders to leave the thorough stones, and not saw them off as is now done: their projection gives additional picturesqueness to the wall, affords room for sculpture, and in repairs may be turned to advantage. Knockers, bell-pulls, scrapers, water-pipes, lamps, railings, are all legitimate subjects for design, and confer additional interest on a building, but as inferior objects they should not be brought too prominently forward: it is in the actual parts of the building itself, more especially the portal, cornice, string courses and windows, the chief ornament should lie; and in all these we should avoid flimsiness, shallowness, senselessness, and extravagance. Neither should the same ornament be indiscriminately applied to all buildings; it would be like playing the same accompaniment to different airs: we must remember that ornament in itself is capable of various expressions, and the antiquary, from a few pieces of such which are found in a ruin, may be informed of the general character the building bore, as clearly as when we find a torso, a head, or an arm of a statue, we can conclude as to the character of the form to which it belonged.

And for this reason, when original ornament is applied, the particular leaf, flower, shell, or figure, which assimilates to the character of the building, should be carefully chosen, and then drawn, altered and adapted for the further developement of that character, and for the production of light and shadow. This is to be seen in Grecian, in Gothic, and in most styles of the past, and we should sedulously avoid the idea, that the actually beautiful is applicable to all purposes, for an object excellent in itself is not always so in combination with a different nature of excellence.

J. B. W.

New Congregational Chapel in Somers-town.—The foundation-stone for a chapel for 2,200 persons of the Independent body in the Somers-town district, was laid on Wednesday, on a site near Oakley-square. It is to be called Bedford Chapel, and will be in the Norman style, with two towers in front, from plans by Mr. Turring, architect, to be carried out by Mr. Holland, builder. The cost will be 3,000*l*.

THE SCOTCH FREEMASONS AND FIRST-STONE LAYING.

The citizens of Edinburgh almost missed the satisfaction of seeing Prince Albert lay the first stone of their National Gallery of Art. It appears that the Prince is not a freemason, and the Duke of Atholl addressed a letter to his Royal Highness, stating that the practice in Scotland legally and by custom, was for none but a freemason to lay a foundation-stone, and that if his Royal Highness did not get himself initiated, he could not legally or with propriety officiate at the ceremony. The Prince enclosed this letter to the Provost, and expressed his regret that this being the custom he could not now fulfil his promise and intention of laying the foundation-stone. In this dilemma, the Lord Provost exerted himself to the utmost. Sheriff Gordon drew up a history of freemasonry, both in Scotland and England, exhibiting the fact that the right arrogated by the Duke was not sustained in any way whatever. The Solicitor-General sent a professional opinion to the effect that the Duke's talk about the law of the case was entirely groundless and nonsensical. Mr. Playfair wrote a letter showing that, in his long and varied experience as an architect, there had been no binding or even prevailing custom as to foundation-stones being laid with masonic honours,—giving, among other instances to that effect, the Register-office, the Physicians' Hall, the Free Church College, and which is even more to the purpose, the Royal Institution, erected on the same site, and for similar purposes as the building the commencement of which the Prince had been asked to countenance and commemorate. The Prince was satisfied, and did his work. The freemasons, however, who were to have formed part of the procession, did not attend.

POSITION OF ARCHITECTS IN IRELAND.

It is reasonable to expect that I should make some reply to the observations of the "Celt," respecting my letter which appeared a short time since in The Builder, on the degraded state of architecture in Ireland. * *

There is a grand obstacle to be overcome (if those works which are monopolized by a certain chosen number of the profession were thrown open to public competition), namely, the unfairness and partiality which are manifest in the decision of every nineteen out of twenty committees advertising for architects' designs. Now, I, as well as every other member of the profession, must feel interested in this, and I should greatly desire to be enlightened as to the method of obviating this difficulty. Means, I am aware, have been from time to time suggested, but all were so very defective that as yet none of them have ripened into existence. I am impressed with the conviction that there are more than ordinary difficulties in the effecting of this end; and it will require great ingenuity and system in any person or persons who may finally mature an arrangement which will totally exclude the possibility of foul play in committees.

Respecting the Board of Public Works, I have a few words to say. Although they have been held up by the "Celt" as an honourable exception to public bodies, and as truly liberal and art-encouraging patrons, yet, let it be remembered, that they, too, have their engineer and architect, under whose directions and from whose drawings a large number of buildings have sprung into existence. It is true that they have, on a few occasions, extended their patronage to other architects than their own officer, and in some instances in addition to that cited by "The Celt," viz.,—The Mullingar Lunatic Asylum, Mr. J. S. Mulvany, architect; Omagh, ditto, Mr. Farrell, architect; and Kilkenny, ditto, Mr. George Papworth, architect; and also on many other occasions that it is unnecessary to name.

This I freely admit, but here, too, there are difficulties in the way. The assistance of professional men is called in, and their designs received (as it is presumed) in conformity with the principles of art, and they are then left to the mercy of any individual to whom the post may be allotted (too often to some quite ignorant of even the rudimental principles of art), to mutilate and lop off as false notions of economy may dictate, and then the works are erected with such incongruities, that they remain to posterity specimens of a degraded taste, instead of relics of improvement in the art of the nineteenth century.

In my former letter I stated that there were "*gems of art to be found in Ireland*," and this assertion seems to have called forth all the satirical qualities of "The Celt," and an expression of regret that I did not point out some of these *gems* to his notice.

To verify my assertion, I conceive it to be a justice which I owe to myself, to take some notice of his observations in this particular. Among those to which I alluded, I shall merely name the principal, viz.,—The New Cork College, by Sir Thos. Deane; the Belfast College, by Mr. Lanyon; the Galway College, by Mr. J. B. Keane; the Cathedral of Tuam, which is universally admired; the Cathedrals of Armagh and Kilkenny; Dundalk chapel, and a few other chapels, and buildings, consisting of lunatic asylums, court houses, &c. through the country, a detailed recital of which I do not believe necessary, as I have already furnished sufficient examples for my purpose.

In my eulogiums upon the public buildings of Dublin, I confess I did *not* include (as "The Celt," has erroneously supposed) the new Terminus of the Great Southern and Western Railway.

Perhaps I may be censured for this criticism, and be accused of want of taste and discernment, but I am prepared, if necessary, to enter into a minute analysis of my objections to this building, to the merits of which, for interior arrangement, I am sensible, but *which*, as a work of art, I must always condemn. Let it not be considered that my observations are the result of prejudice, because the architect is an Englishman. Although there have been great complaints (and with good reason, too,) respecting the partiality of the company in the arrangement of the competition advertised for this building. I have seen all the public buildings in the metropolis and principal cities and towns of England, and can appreciate the talents of some of its professors there. I cannot believe that the King's Bridge Terminus, with all its attempted grandeur, which is so pleasing to the uneducated eye of the public, and for which the shareholders have had the pleasure to pay in or about 100,000*l*. is deserving of being weighed in the scale of art with the simple, unpretending, and truly artistic church in Mountjoy-street, designed by the late Mr. Semple.

J. J. L.

NOTES IN THE PROVINCES.

The first stone of the new church of St. James, Ogley Hay, was laid on Thursday week by Lord Lewisham. It is in the early decorated style, consists of a nave, transepts, and chancel, and has a turret for three bells surmounting the west end. The church will contain 300 adults and 80 children. The cost is to be about 1,200*l*. Mr. G. T. Robinson, of Wolverhampton, is the architect, and Messrs. Hardwick and Son, of Birmingham, are the builders.——The Leicester public cemetery is now open; its size is about 12 acres.——On 29th ult. the church of Norton St. Philip's, near Bath, was opened on completion of the works, nearly the whole church having been rebuilt, except the western tower, and a portion of south aisle. The whole area of the church is filled with open seats: the chancel seats and screens are carved. The floor is paved with Minton's encaustic tiles, and the windows of chancel are filled with painted glass by Wailes. The work has been completed from designs by Mr. G. G. Scott, architect, and carried out by Mr. William Brown, builder, Frome.——The school-rooms and residences of the Scudamore foundation at Hereford are about to be erected on plans by Mr. T. Nicholson, of St. Owen's-street, Hereford, architect. The cost must not exceed 1,500*l*.——On Wednesday week a discussion took place in the Liverpool council on a motion for the adoption of the report of a committee for the establishment of a free public library there. Mr. Picton, in making the motion, remarked that Manchester was about to follow the example of its neighbour Salford, and measures were then being taken to establish a free public library in Warrington. In New York 400,000 dollars had been given for

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